

Hamlets tragic flaw

[Literature](#), [British Literature](#)



Procrastination is an action or rather an inaction, because when you procrastinate, you are avoiding completing a task. “ Emotionally, Hamlet’s procrastination produces in him a growing rage that leads to his killing of Polonius (3. 4) Set in motion the incidents that lead to the bloody climax” (Boyce). This quote illustrates the topic of the following essay. It clearly outlines why the inability to act is ultimately the tragic flaw of the character Hamlet. Firstly, Hamlet’s procrastination ultimately leads to the premature death of many characters throughout the play.

In act 3 scene 4, while confronting his mother, Hamlet hears a noise from behind a curtain. Thinking it was Claudius spying, Hamlet passes his sword through the curtain and stabs Polonius. Polonius calls out “ O, I am slain! ”(3. 4. 22), then falls and dies. Hamlet’s Procrastination led to this because his emotions are being built up so, that when he hears the slightest thing that may be Claudius, he reacts in a violent way. That is not a good thing, because the death of Polonius will lead to two other events that will eventually cause three other characters to die.

Moreover, in the final scene, three more characters die. Claudius has a cup of poisoned wine for Hamlet, but Gertrude unknowingly drinks it and immediately starts to die. Just before she passes, she exclaims “ No! No! The drink, the drink - O my dear Hamlet - the drink, the drink! I am poison’d (dies)” (5. 2. 299-300). After Gertrude dies, Hamlet and Laertes fight more violently, and Laertes cuts Hamlet. In a brawl, Hamlet gets a hold of Laertes’ sword and stabs him. When Hamlet realizes the sword is poisoned, he turns and stabs Claudius.

Hamlet says “...the point envenomed too... (stabs the king)... Follow my mother! (Claudius dies)” (5. 2. 311-317). After Claudius dies, Laertes says to Hamlet “...he is justly served...” (5. 2. 318-322) then dies. He says this to reassure Hamlet that he did the right thing. Hamlet’s procrastination led to the climax of the play, because if he would have killed Claudius sooner, he would have discovered that Hamlet knows about the murder and he never would have called the sword fight, and none of this brutality would have occurred.

Secondly, Hamlet’s procrastination is causing other characters to plot against him. After Hamlet killed Polonius, Claudius plans to ship Hamlet away to England and make Polonius’ death look accidental. When he reveals his plan, he is talking to Gertrude and says “ O Gertrude, come away! / The sun no sooner shall the mountains touch, / But we will ship him hence: and this vile deed / We must with all our majesty and skill, / Both countenance and excuse! ” (4. 1. 28-32). He is simply telling Gertrude that Hamlet will be on a ship to England before the sun rises.

He also adds that they must both “ countenance and excuse” the death of Polonius to protect their identity. Furthermore, when Laertes hears of his father’s death, he returns to Denmark, and he and Claudius plan to kill Hamlet and make it look like an accident. The king devises a plan and tells Laertes “ to thine own peace... he shall not choose but fall... even his mother... shall call it accident” (4. 7. 61-68). Laertes is not fully satisfied with the king’s plan and he says to Claudius “ My Lord, I will be ruled; / The rather if you devise it so / That I might be the organ” (4. 7. 69-70).

Laertes and Claudius devise a plan in which Laertes will kill Hamlet to avenge his father's death, and Claudius will not need to worry about Hamlet revealing the truth of King Hamlet's murder. Lastly, Hamlet's procrastination allows time for events to unfold, ultimately bringing about his own death. Claudius caught on that Hamlet knows what happened to his father, so Claudius has Hamlet fight Laertes in a fencing match. We find out about this plan when a lord comes to invite Hamlet to the match. The lord entered the room where Hamlet was and said " My Lord, his majesty... if your / Pleasure hold to play with Laertes" (5. . 186-190). Hamlet accepts the invitation to the match. The purpose of the fencing match is for Laertes to get revenge on Hamlet for killing Polonius. This will also serve as a means for Claudius to eliminate Hamlet so that he will not reveal the truth about King Hamlet's murder. Furthermore, unbeknownst to Hamlet, the match is rigged. When Claudius tells Laertes that he is to kill Hamlet in the fencing match, Laertes responds " I will do't... I will anoint my sword. / I bought an unction of a mountebank, so mortal... if I gall him slightly, / It may be death" (4. 7. 140-148).

He says this because he wants to inform the reader that he will poison his sword to ensure Hamlet dies if he cuts him even slightly. This shows how determined Laertes is to get revenge on Hamlet for killing Polonius. Therefore, the tragic flaw of Hamlet is ultimately procrastination. There are many examples throughout the play supporting this fact. If the other characters would have procrastinated the way Hamlet did, the play would have been much heavier with subplots and underlying moods and feelings.

Based on this play, most people would think twice before putting off any large tasks that they may need to accomplish.